

Open Letter to Church Board

Date: February 25, 2014

To: Church Board:

Jimmye Saldivar, Chairman
Don Whitley, Secretary
Barb Scantlin, Elder Chair

Katie Spencer, V. Chair
Dorene Drake, Treasurer
Pat Whitley, Deacons

Oaks Christian Church
1216 Bethlehem St
Houston, Texas 77018-1918

From: Charlie Dean, church member

Ladies and Gentlemen:

OCC continues to have obvious **problems with attendance and money**. I have reviewed the minutes of the business meetings from January 8, 2012 forward, and the newsletters from January 2006 forward, and the OCC related material that I find on the Internet. It appears that we are not seriously addressing the attendance problem and the money problem. As a messenger of bad news, I approach the situation again with anxiety. "None love the messenger who brings bad news." Sophocles (496 BC-406 BC).

People are motivated to contribute money by a belief that their contribution will be used for some laudable purpose, and perhaps to help OCC achieve its purpose as set out in the Bylaws. From time to time before the collection basket is passed, I hear "giving back," "helping others," and such phrases intended to evoke our emotion. Sometimes I hear someone "lift up" OCC for a blessing. We cannot buy our way out of this. We cannot pray our way out of it either, and do nothing else. The Board is leading some people into circular reasoning, where the output of each emotional iteration becomes the input of the next, separating one's intellect from one's emotion.

There are clichés for giving and pledging: It is a response to God's call. It is a response to the abundance in our own lives. It is a statement of thanksgiving. The amount we give should be at a level that honors God's generosity to us. Do it because of how much He loves us. It will increase our joy.

I have heard the old saw that "It is more blessed to give than to receive." There is some truth in this. There is a problem though when the rhetoric that induces the giving fails to square with the budget, the attendance, and intellect. I am not trying to be sarcastic about it, but our decisions ought to be based more on intellect. The Board's practice is to solicit donations and pledges under one theory while spending under another. If the Board only plans to perpetuate the status quo (there being almost no evidence to the contrary), it ought to dispense with rhetoric aimed at emotion and simply say that it needs to pay bills.

As I reviewed the wordpress site for OCC, I ran across <http://oakscchouston.wordpress.com/2013/09/01/get-involved/>, titled "**Get Involved!**" Posted on September 1, 2013. It suggests CWF, Sunday School Classes, Community Lunch, Handbell Choir, Choir, Bible Study, Prayer Circle, and Helping at MANNA. These activities are OK. However, **nothing is available at OCC to address the attendance problem or the money problem**. There should be purposeful work, considering cause and effect, that an OCC member could do that would address the membership and money problems in a meaningful way. This should be high priority.
